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New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/59/1)

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which details the work of the United Nations in various fields over the past year, analyses current challenges and puts forward some enlightening recommendations that are worthy of serious consideration by all countries.

I should like to focus my statement on four points in connection with the report.

First, with respect to the issue of peace and security, the United Nations, as noted in the report, has been through an extraordinarily challenging year. The United Nations has played an important role in facilitating solutions to the problems of Iraq, the Sudan, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti, and we express our appreciation in that regard. However, it must be acknowledged that there have been setbacks in many regional hotbeds of tension.

At the same time, non-traditional security threats such as terrorism continue to increase, and the United Nations continues to face many difficulties.

The security situation in Iraq remain serious. Innocent civilians continue to suffer from the turmoil, and the peace process and post-war reconstruction still have a long way to go. China believes that the United Nations should play an important role in the peace process and facilitate the holding of successful elections in Iraq. We are in favour of the timely convening of an international conference on Iraq, and we hope that, through such a conference, all parties concerned could resolve their differences, enhance their common understanding and jointly promote security and stability in Iraq.

Prospects for the Middle East peace process remain bleak. Israeli forces recently launched a large-scale military action in the Gaza Strip, and the conflict between Palestine and Israel has intensified. We urge the Israeli forces to withdraw as soon as possible and call on both sides to exercise restraint, resume dialogue at an early date and create conditions for the effective implementation of the road map. The Quartet mechanism should also more forcefully promote such efforts.

During the general debate, most countries referred to the question of Darfur, in the Sudan. Like all other countries, China is very concerned at the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur. We support the African Union's leading role in that context, welcome the efforts made by the Sudanese Government to date, and hope that the Government will continue to make greater efforts and achieve substantive progress key areas.

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The causes of the Darfur problem are complex. The international community should facilitate a solution by constructive means, as sanctions will only further complicate the issue. Over the past year, there has been a noticeable increase in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the available forces and resources cannot meet the needs in that area. The Secretary-General appeals to all States — especially the developed countries — to provide greater political support, as well as forces and resources, to the United Nations. We hope that the developed countries will take practical action speedily in response to the appeal by the Secretary-General.

Last year, terrorist attacks occurred successively in Madrid, Istanbul, Jakarta, Moscow and Beslan. This demonstrates that terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain real and serious challenges confronting us. Only by strengthening international cooperation, addressing the symptoms and root causes and avoiding double standards can a solution be found to that problem.

Secondly, on the issue of development, we note that one outstanding feature of this year's general debate is that all countries are more concerned with the issue of development. The overwhelming majority of developing countries have demanded more voice in international economic affairs in order to achieve genuine economic independence. Development is the basis for the advancement of human civilization. Only coordinated, balanced and universal global development can bring about sustained peace and stability in the world. Without prosperity and progress in developing countries, the ideals of peace and stability in the world will remain merely "castles in the sky".

At present, we urgently need to reverse the trend toward a continually widening gap between the North and the South and the ever increasing poverty in some developing countries. The key lies in adapting to the requirements of economic globalization, increasing the weight of the developing countries in decision-making in international economic affairs and establishing a just and reasonable new international economic order, so as to allow globalization to benefit the whole world.

We must establish a complete, open and fair multilateral trading system and push forward multilateral trade negotiations on the principle of mutual understanding and mutual concession. We must also give greater attention to improving the international financial system and promoting the growth of the global economy. Developed countries should shoulder their obligations and responsibilities and provide more support to developing countries in the areas of markets, resources, technologies, debt relief and trade conditions, and should establish an effective global partnership with the developing countries. Meanwhile, South-South cooperation should be strengthened. Developing countries should join in efforts towards self-improvement, participate widely in international affairs and gradually change their disadvantaged position in the process of economic globalization.

The United Nations summit next year will focus on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We hope the summit will crystallise our consensus, make the international community pay more attention to the issue of development, increase input in the development field and provide new energy in the continuous effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Thirdly, on the subject of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, we note that there is already a wide consensus on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in the 3rd meeting, "Let us not imagine that, if we fail to make good use of it, we will find any more effective instrument". China totally agrees with this conclusion. The evolution of the international situation over the past year once again shows that addressing various security threats facing mankind and achieving common development is impossible without multilateralism and multilateral mechanisms centred around the United Nations.

China supports the United Nations in its efforts to keep up with the times and carry out necessary and reasonable reform. The objective of the reform should be to strengthen leading role of the United Nations in international affairs, enhance its efficiency, strengthen its capability to deal with various threats and challenges and better reflect the common voice and needs of developing countries. We are in favour of an appropriate expansion of the Security Council and of increasing the representation of developing countries on a priority basis. We support the work of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and look forward to seeing new ideas, new thoughts and

new recommendations on United Nations reform in the report of the Panel.

Fourthly, on the subject of the rule of law in international relations, Secretary-General Annan stressed the importance of the rule of law and elaborated further on this question in his statement to the General Assembly. We endorse the view of the Secretary-General and believe that it is crucially important to adhere to the rule of law in international relations. Whether it be for maintenance of international peace and security or the promotion of development and the protection of human rights, it is always necessary to stick to and respect the rule of law and, in particular, to abide by the United Nations Charter — a kind of constitution for international relations.

Secretary-General Annan pointed out that the countries that claim the rule of law within their countries must also respect the rule of law in international relations. This should be born in mind by all. To apply the rules of international law selectively and only in one's own favour, while disregarding other less favourable rules, does not contribute to the promotion and achievement of the rule of law and justice in the international context. We hope that, with the joint efforts of the Secretary-General and all parties, we will truly achieve the rule of law and democracy in international relations.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is very proud and happy to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly with such outstanding competence. My delegation would also like to say that it is grateful to the Secretary-General for the high quality and succinctness of the report made available to States on the work of the Organization. We will here touch on the questions of peace and security.

The Secretary-General devotes the first part of his report to questions relating to peace and security, and in so doing, he gives us an opportunity to recall how enormous the challenges are, not only to our security per se, but also to the development and well-being of our peoples. The massive killings perpetrated by terrorist groups, fearing neither God nor man, now pose a serious threat to our collective peace and security. Formerly, terrorist acts were targeted, but now they spare no one. They kill indiscriminately. They kill innocent civilians and military personnel without distinction. Intensifying our campaign against this scourge through cooperation and the implementation of rules on the suppression of terrorist acts is imperative, to say the least.

We need steadfastly to continue the process of general and complete disarmament by putting an end to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This, inter alia, means renouncing the production of fissile materials and tightening controls on the production, trade and use of materials that could be used to manufacture weapons of mass destruction — be they nuclear, bacteriological or chemical. That would reduce the risk of those types of weapons and products falling into the hands of criminal and terrorist organizations.

Relaunching multilateral disarmament negotiations through appropriate mechanisms is critical if we want to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and free the world from the spectre of nuclear war. Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted in July 2001, must continue, both at the national and at the international levels. We welcome the progress that Member States have made in this area by adopting moratoriums against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and by holding the meetings envisioned in the Programme of Action.

Accordingly, consultations on the conclusion of a legally binding instrument regarding the tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons must continue, because, unfortunately, terrorism and armed conflict too are fuelled by the excessive, destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

Furthermore, we agree with the Secretary-General's comments about the recent surge in peacekeeping missions. Indeed, the United Nations has been particularly in demand in recent years because of the emergence of new armed conflicts. The capacity of the United Nations in the area of peace maintenance — although there has been significant improvement — is being sorely tried because of the unprecedented surge in demand.

Resources allocated for peacekeeping thus need to be increased substantially, so that the United Nations can respond efficiently to the many demands made upon it. In order to further encourage States to provide

troops, we think that the security and safety of peacekeeping personnel should be reinforced, and that contacts with troop contributing countries should be enhanced. For its part, Gabon will continue to participate in peacekeeping operations, side by side with other Member States.

In his report, the Secretary-General also mentions the contribution by development organizations in addressing the root causes of conflict. While we are grateful to those organizations, we urge them to strengthen their intervention, which forms part both of prevention and of an integrated approach to conflict resolution.

We recall that in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871), the Secretary-General had already noted that unless the causes are eliminated, we cannot truly put an end to conflict. Among those causes we would stress poverty, which weakens and threatens order, national stability and the security of democratic institutions and thus makes countries vulnerable to armed conflict. Therefore, the United Nations must be innovative when mobilizing international support for the development of Member States, particularly the developing countries.

With regard to Africa in particular, we recognize the important reforms that the Africans themselves have undertaken to improve governance, to establish democracy and stability, to combat poverty and disease and to establish the basis of true regional integration, as shown by the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The commitments undertaken by the international community, including the Group of Eight (G-8), in support of NEPAD should be fulfilled in order to avoid repeating the experience of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in the 1990s.

Concerning reform of the United Nations, my delegation welcomes the results already obtained in the area of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. But we must strengthen the central role of the General Assembly, which is the most representative principal organ of the United Nations.

While we recognize the significant progress that has been made to improve the working methods of the Security Council, we also need to continue our discussions on expanding the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent membership categories, in order to make it more representative and much more democratic. The heads of delegation who spoke from this rostrum during the general debate unanimously spoke out in favour of an overhaul of that body, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the need to ensure proper follow-up to all of our discussions in the United Nations, to put an end to mere rhetoric and to truly act upon the outcome of our discussions.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): Since, in speaking on this item, this is the first occasion on which I am taking the floor at this session, let me join those who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly; we pledge our full support to you.

Allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of the Barbados delegation for the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General in leading the work of the Organization during what he has called an extraordinarily challenging year. I would also like to thank him for his very comprehensive report on the work of the Organization over the past year (A/59/1). It highlights some of the main issues and challenges which the Organization has had to face during that period. Barbados welcomes the report and would like to make comments on a few selected issues.

Over the past year, the Organization has had to respond to a number of varied political, humanitarian and economic crises around the globe. Yet the Organization does not possess the overall capacity to enable it to respond effectively to all of those challenges.

That is why the Barbados delegation believes that there needs to be a continuing process of review, reform and renewal of the Organization. In that connection, we eagerly await the report of the Secretary-General on the work of his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 58/316, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and intend to work closely with other States Members of the Organization to ensure that its elements are faithfully implemented. Our work on revitalization, however, is not complete. We need to continue to monitor the

implementation of the resolution with a view to identifying further improvements in the working methods of the Assembly.

Reform of the Security Council is another area on which Barbados believes that increasing emphasis needs to be placed. As the Foreign Minister of Barbados said in her statement in the general debate (see A/59/PV.12), the Council must be made more representative of today's membership of the United Nations, as well as more transparent in its working methods and more democratic in its decision-making.

The significant increase in demand for United Nations peacekeeping operations over the past year reflects, we believe, renewed faith in the United Nations and confirms the role that the United Nations should play in the maintenance of peace and security. In that connection, Barbados welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and hopes that the Mission will received the necessary resources and support to enable it to perform its mission effectively.

Barbados joins those delegations that believe that the United Nations provides the best framework for international cooperation. We remain fully committed to a renewed emphasis on multilateralism as the main means for the international community to take action in responding to the many and varied global problems.

Barbados recognizes that international terrorism poses a great threat to global peace and security. We share, however, the assessment of the Secretary-General in his report that, for the majority of the world's people, the most immediate threats are those of poverty, hunger, unsafe drinking water, environmental degradation and endemic or infectious diseases.

Given the links between those areas and the Millennium Development Goals, Barbados believes that greater efforts must be made at both the national and the international levels to undertake activities that would facilitate the achievement of the Goals by 2015. We look forward to the high-level meeting to be held next year, which will review progress in the achievement of those Goals as set out in the Millennium Declaration. Barbados intends to participate actively in the review process.

Barbados considers the work of the Organization in the area of sustainable development to be particularly important. We appreciate and welcome the progress that is being made towards achieving the targets in the thematic areas of water, sanitation and human settlements, which were the areas of focus of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at its session earlier this year.

However, we consider that issues of climate change, disaster management and preparedness and vulnerability need to be assigned a higher priority on the agenda of the Commission's work. Barbados and most of the other island countries of the Caribbean have experienced this year an increase in the frequency and intensity of hurricanes, which have wrought great destruction and have devastated some of our economies. We look forward to the support of the international community, and particularly the United Nations, in identifying means and ways for mitigating the effects of these potentially disastrous weather occurrences, which scientific evidence seems to be suggesting are linked to global warming.

In closing, let me commend the Secretary-General for his efforts at improving the overall administration and management of the Organization. We have noted with satisfaction the initiatives that have been taken to enhance the Organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises and to enhance security, both at Headquarters and in field offices, in the light of increased security threats. The launch earlier this year of the common Internet-based supplier registration and database facility for procurement purposes is also particularly noteworthy, and Barbados looks forward to learning next year about the success of that particular initiative.

We are also encouraged by the observation in the report of the Secretary-General that a significant percentage of reforms proposed in the 1997 and 2002 reform packages have been implemented. We take this as an indication that the Organization is reshaping its capacity to address the global challenges ahead.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As I begin my statement, Sir, I would like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the proceedings of our Assembly. Your personal and professional qualities guarantee the success of the fifty-ninth session, and you will enjoy the steadfast support of the delegation of Paraguay.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). I fully agree that this has been a very

challenging year for the United Nations. Conflicts in various parts of the world, increased demand for peace operations, combating international terrorism and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction have been the main focus of the Organization's attention, drawing attention away from the consideration of threats that are more immediate to the majority of the people of the world, such as poverty, hunger, education, deterioration of the environment and endemic or infectious diseases. Those needs call for urgent responses to the legitimate demands of our peoples for a standard of living that is compatible with human dignity.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, progress in complying with the Goals set out in the Millennium Declaration has produced some positive results, but overall results are mixed. Paraguay trusts that, by working in solidarity to meet the Millennium Goals (MDGs), we will also contribute to diminishing the causes of violence, and to preventing their misuse by evil-doers who seek to manipulate them as a political tool to distort civilian means of attaining goals that were designed solely to promote the progress and economic and social development of our peoples.

We believe that a sincere alliance between the developed countries and the developing countries, as well as unconditional respect for commitments entered into under the Monterrey consensus, will effectively contribute to achieving the MDGs.

We agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Events over the past year have underlined the continued threat that terrorism poses to international peace and security and the need for broad-based international cooperation to counter it." (*A/59/1, para. 75*)

That is why we cannot fail to reiterate our commitment and responsibility, as Members of the United Nations, to restore to the international community the security and protection it needs.

Our Organization needs the determined support of its Member States and international cooperation, because no one can say that we are immune to the attacks of international terrorism, as facts have shown. But the fight against terrorism must proceed in keeping with the principle of safeguarding and respecting individual freedom, human rights and the rule of law, principles that are unknown to or have been rejected by terrorist groups. We remain faithful to those principles, which will help us defeat international terrorism.

The Republic of Paraguay would like to reaffirm to the General Assembly its full support and cooperation, so that the Organization can play its major role in combating terrorism.

Human rights policy is one of the keystones of the foreign policy of our national Government, and as a member of the Commission on Human Rights, Paraguay continues to be committed to promoting and encouraging full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, and it will continue to do its work with an independent mind, and in the context of respect for the relevant norms and principles. Similarly, we reiterate our full support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

During the period covered in the report of the Secretary-General, there has been an increased demand for United Nations peacekeeping activities, which has challenged the Organization to react with the capacity and efficiency necessary to discharge such peace missions. Since the first quarter of 2001, Paraguay has been participating in various peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, and it will continue to do so within its capacities.

Paraguay firmly supports the process of strengthening the United Nations. We believe that that process should continue to focus on revitalizing the General Assembly, strengthening the Economic and Social Council and reforming the Security Council and its methods of work. Our Organization is a tool of the international community that must evolve and adapt to the realities of the new century. The United Nations serves our peoples; it is not for our peoples to serve the United Nations.

That process must ensure the full participation of Member States under conditions of equality, in the most transparent and democratic way possible, as set forth in the Charter. That will ensure that collective interests will prevail over individual interests.

We are encouraged by, and grateful for, the reference made by the Secretary-General in his report to the special needs of least developed and landlocked countries, as well as small island developing States. For the first time in the history of the Organization, landlocked States now have a Programme of Action,

which was adopted in August 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. That Programme was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in order to provide a just response to our special needs.

As trade and development coordinator of the 31-member Group of Landlocked Developing Countries in Geneva, Paraguay will continue to call for special and differential treatment at the World Trade Organization and other trade forums in order to ensure that the products of those countries have access to international markets. We trust we will have the support of Member States in that regard.

In the São Paolo consensus, which was reached at the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Brazil in June of last year, member States of UNCTAD agreed on the revitalization of the Organization's efforts to, among other things, devote particular attention to the special needs of landlocked developing countries, with a view to somehow compensating them for the disadvantages they face with regard to access to world markets The surcharges we must pay for the transport of both our exports and imports amount to 14.1 per cent of our export income, as compared to 8.6 per cent of the export income of developing countries and 4 per cent of that of developed countries. That, in addition to excessive delays at border crossings in transit countries, results in a severe negative impact on the economic and social development of our countries.

We trust that we will receive the support necessary from international development and financial bodies and from donor countries in order to mobilize the additional resources needed and the innovative preferential terms that will make it possible to carry out the work of building the infrastructure needed to ensure domestic networks and links with transit countries on the way to maritime ports.

Events in the Middle East, and in particular the situation between Israel and Palestine, have not changed in any way that would give one reason to believe that an end is at hand to the spiral of violence, with its increasing toll in lives among both peoples. We therefore urge the parties involved to return to the negotiating table as soon as possible, with a view to resuming negotiations in accordance with the road map and implementing its obligations. Paraguay extends its full support for any efforts to be made by the Quartet.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Paraguay has been following, with attention and concern, recent events throughout the world that have hampered the re-establishment and maintenance of international stability. We should not waver in our determination to dedicate all our efforts and resources to the search for reconciliation and the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and mutual understanding, and within the framework of the norms of international law and the rule of international law.

Mr. Toro Jimenez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for introducing his report on the work of the Organization (A/59/1). The report is an outstanding and useful document, and I shall refer to some of its contents momentarily.

I would once again like to reiterate our country's support and cooperation for the work and efforts of the United Nations during the difficult moments brought about by the invasion of Iraq, which has had devastating consequences for the courageous Iraqi people. We also extend our support and cooperation for the role the Organization will have to play in Iraq with regard to peacekeeping and the maintenance of international peace and security once the occupation ends.

Venezuela believes in the United Nations as the central democratic Organization in a democratic international community devoted to economic and social development and to multilateralism. It is both the vehicle and the platform for the establishment of a multipolar, interdependent and peaceful world. In that context, the primary focus of our efforts is to promote international cooperation in order, in particular, to strengthen South-South cooperation, with a view to achieving the essential goal of combating poverty and exclusion, which are obstacles to our peoples' exercise of self-determination and pose grave threats to the democratic stability of States.

Although we appreciate the fact that there have been some positive results in moving towards the Millennium Summit's Goals, we note that that progress has been uneven. Venezuela understands that the Goals can only be met through concrete economic and social policies and wise Governments that are attuned to the wishes of the people, as well as through the massive mobilization of resources for development, increased

coordination among developing countries and joint efforts between developing and more-developed countries, which bear most of the responsibility for creating a new world where the social and economic progress of peoples has priority. The implementation of measures aimed at eradicating poverty and righting age-old injustice is the requisite for a new world order that is humane and just.

Venezuela has made substantial efforts to combat poverty despite the anti-national and subversive acts carried out in 2002 in my country to attack its democratic stability and institutional development.

The 2003 United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* noted an increase in Venezuela's rank on the human development index. Life expectancy rose from 72.9 years in 2000 to 73.5 in 2001. The average primary school attendance rate rose from 65 per cent in 1999 to 68 per cent in 2000-2001.

Those encouraging figures are the result of a significant increase in the State budget for health care, education and the implementation of public policies that provide the most needy with basic services, even within their homes, with a view to overcoming the effects of economic setbacks in our country over the past two decades.

In Venezuela, as our President has noted, we believe that, in order to reduce poverty, power must be given to the people. To that end, we are giving power to the people. We are implementing solid programmes of great social impact. Our educational programmes include the Robinson I and II missions for general literacy; the José Felix Rivas programme, targeting the adult population that has been excluded from the formal education system; and the Antonio José de Sucre mission, which brings those who have been excluded from the university system into the higher education system.

We have also implemented such health programmes as the Barrio Adentro plan, guaranteeing access to health care for the underserviced sector of the population suffering from poverty- and neglect-related illnesses; the Guacaipuro mission, designed to involve the indigenous population in society and to ensure recognition of its constitutional rights; the Mercal mission, ensuring the people consistently accessible prices for basic, everyday goods; and the Vuelvan Caras mission, designed to change the nation's socio-economic model, which we have broadened and strengthened through the establishment of the new Ministry of Public Economy — a new public service to ensure the country's comprehensive and endogenous development and thus to free us from the neo-liberal system to which we have been shackled in the recent past.

In brief, the underlying rationale for all those programmes is to eliminate poverty and its gravest consequences and to provide a dignified standard of living for present and future Venezuelans by ensuring — and I stress this most firmly — their genuine participation in the country's economic and social transformation. Thus, our country is taking firm and confident steps on the path towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Human rights can in no way be sacrificed in the fight against international terrorism. Such a sacrifice would be foolish, contradictory and a crime in itself. If Governments met the basic food, housing, health and education needs of their peoples, we could peacefully build a world free of terrorism. Efforts to combat terrorism with more terrorism, violence and repression are futile. The answer to terrorism begins and ends with respect for one's neighbours and their fundamental rights.

In conclusion, we believe that those aspects are critical and require our urgent attention if we are to build the world we seek — a just and equitable world in which there is a place for everyone.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, which allows us to appreciate the important achievements and the limitations and difficulties inherent in meeting the challenges facing the international community.

The Secretary-General has pointed out that this has been an extremely difficult year for the United Nations. My delegation shares that concern and reiterates that the Members of the United Nations must assume their collective responsibilities to ensure that the multilateral machinery, based on respect for international law and not on the predominance of force, functions properly. The collective system we have created is founded on the conviction that respect for international law and the eradication of the use and threat of use of force are critical to ensuring the

coexistence of the peoples of our international community. Given all of our differences and divergences, dialogue and negotiation are preferable to the use of force.

As we approach the sixtieth birthday of the United Nations, we must review history and analyse the Organization's failures that have imperilled the very existence of multilateralism. The United Nations has become an arbiter of peace and security, the guarantor of human rights and dignity, the promoter of economic and social development and the arena in which visions for the future can be expressed in a framework of mutual respect and hope for the well-being of and better days for our peoples. The means currently available will never match the magnitude and complexity of the task.

Ecuador as a whole views with concern the proliferation of conflicts in all corners of the world, affecting millions of human beings. Those conflicts are becoming humanitarian disasters that have a particular impact on the most vulnerable in society: children, women, the elderly and the handicapped. In March, I had the honour to preside over a delegation from the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and I saw the awful effects of war on vulnerable human beings in that fraternal country. When one puts a human face on cold statistics, the magnitude of the tragedy is easier to understand. The proliferation of conflicts in which child soldiers take up weapons and kill before they go to school is one example of that tragedy. When women, the keystones of society, become military targets, that represents an attempt to destroy society. The hopes of thousands and millions are pinned on the decisions adopted in our Hall and chambers, and we must be aware of our ethical and moral responsibilities.

Conflicts have spread and domestic warfare is a new phenomenon of our era. The new frontier for the United Nations is in their solution and in post-conflict reconstruction. Aware of the global nature of the problem, Ecuador has committed its support for the cause of peace and has decided actively to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The national Government will support the international community's efforts to protect the human rights of homeless civilians, defenceless women and children, the elderly and the handicapped. We are sending contingents to help rebuild the infrastructure of Haiti, a country by which we will stand in solidarity and humane compassion.

The Conference on Disarmament must resume its role in negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements, stressing the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction that continue to threaten humankind as a whole. The Secretary-General has indicated in his report that he is concerned about slow progress in the disarmament process, violations of non-proliferation agreements, evidence of clandestine networks and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist activities.

Ecuador attaches great importance to the Organization's endeavours to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as well as its efforts to eliminate anti-personnel mines.

My country is a country of asylum for thousands of our Colombian brethren who have found in peaceful Ecuador a refuge from a conflict that has repercussions for my country. We are grateful to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to the United Nations for their efforts, but they are not enough. Ecuador appeals to the international community to support humanitarian efforts and to safeguard peace in our nation.

The people and the Government of my country are convinced that human rights must prevail and that they must be fully respected. We will continue to make progress in formulating an international culture of respect for human beings based on fundamental principles, international treaties, international tribunals and the International Criminal Court for trying human rights violations.

Ecuador has had the honour of presiding over the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. That international instrument is necessary to ensure the full exercise of the human rights of 600 million human beings. I call on all members to support the cause of persons with disabilities so that the convention can be concluded during the coming meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee. In that way, we can ensure that those special individuals enjoy their rights and are protected by the international community.

Poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, lack of water, epidemics, endemic and infectious diseases affect billions of human beings. Such marginalization and structural imbalances in the international architecture will grow worse if we do not take urgent steps to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor — between those who have everything and those who have nothing. This is the real source of violence and despair. Development is the key to giving men and women the opportunity to fulfil themselves as human beings. They must be given the dignity of life. There can be no security without well-being, however many impregnable walls of separation are built along a country's borders. In order to provide greater opportunities, we must address not only international cooperation, but also fair trade, without the multi-million-dollar distortion of subsidies that condemn millions to poverty and despair.

The displacement of millions of human beings in their search for a better life for their families is a phenomenon that deserves worldwide attention. Such men and women are obliged to leave their countries to find work; and they are contributing to the development of the host countries and generating tremendous wealth in those countries. We must find solutions that generate employment, encourage investment and achieve comparable levels of well-being in migrants' countries of origin, with a view to reducing migration, which has such serious social consequences for countries of origin. But above all, Ecuador believes that all countries must respect the human rights of migrants.

Ecuador condemns terrorism in all its manifestations and is cooperating with the international community in combating it. The phenomenon of international terrorism, which transcends national borders, calls for collective effort and international cooperation. We agree with the Secretary-General that the struggle against terrorism must not take place at the expense of fundamental freedoms and the basic dignity of individuals.

In 2003, according to the report of the Secretary-General, there were some 700 natural disasters resulting in 75,000 deaths and in economic losses of more than $65 billion. As a country which is vulnerable to natural disasters, Ecuador highly appreciates the concrete cooperation of the United Nations in this sphere.

We would particularly like to mention the deterioration of the world's climate and the devastation caused by climate change and global warming. Ecuador attaches particular importance to the monitoring and studying of the El Niño phenomenon and has thus decided to participate in the work of the International Research Centre on El Niño in Guayaquil, Ecuador, which will make it possible for the international community clearly to understand this huge worldwide problem.

Despite the huge challenges and obstacles besetting mankind, the international community is helping to build a better world. In this interdependent world, responsibility is shared, as stated in the Charter and as reiterated in the Millennium Declaration. Without a joint effort, there can be no viable solution to the complex problems facing human beings.

The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, set up by the Secretary-General, will submit its report in December. But decisions for reforming the international architecture can be adopted only by the Members of the Organization. Changes are necessary and essential. The challenges of today are not the same as those faced by the international community 60 years ago, despite what we are told by those who seek to halt the march of time and history. The year 2005 will be decisive in defining the intimate relationship between security and development. Because of the link between the two, we must define a comprehensive agenda which does not exclude the needs of some while advancing those of others. Reforming the international architecture is indispensable.

My delegation reaffirms its conviction that radical reform measures must be adopted to ensure that the General Assembly will be efficient and able to fulfil the mandates and objectives of the peoples represented in it. The Security Council must be more democratic, transparent and representative. The Economic and Social Council must promote human development in its social, economic and cultural dimensions. Reform must extend to the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

We would like in conclusion to pay tribute to the victims of the 19 August 2003 attack on the United Nations offices in Baghdad. The safety and security of United Nations personnel must be guaranteed and the blue flag, which represents us all, must be the symbol of respect for humankind.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Each year, during the session of the General Assembly, the peoples of the whole world look to the United Nations with concern as well as hope. People feel concern because their existence is threatened — threatened by intra-national conflicts which ruin and break up grief-stricken families, sometimes forcing them into permanent exile and causing them untold suffering. They are threatened by hunger, disease and poverty. They are threatened by constant violations of their human rights and dignity. And, unfortunately, all of this is the doing of human beings.

Therefore, our peoples look with great hope to the United Nations, which was established to maintain peace and security, to promote development for all mankind and to guarantee respect by all for human rights for everybody. People look to the United Nations and ask, "For how long will this go on?" We are happy that answers to our peoples' supplications are being sought. We are happy that we have a guiding compass here: the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

The Secretary-General sets out in his report his vision of humankind's main concerns and questions the most important issues and problems which the United Nations and international community must confront. He describes the work done by the United Nations and outlines future measures for making progress. I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the exhaustive, comprehensive nature of his report (A/59/1). The report is striking for the tone that it sets and for its humanistic dimension. Indeed, it is a report that focuses on the individual — the individual who has to be saved from conflicts; the individual who has to be freed from hunger and poverty; the individual who has to be protected from economic insecurity; the individual who must finally be liberated from violations against his person and his rights. It is, therefore, a rich document that is full of inspiring lessons, and the strength and depth of the statements that we have heard during this discussion testify to that.

At this point in our discussion — as I am the last speaker, this is the final meeting on this subject and this is the last day of the week — I am simply too late; everything has already been said, often, quite well said, and, sometimes, excellently so. Therefore I will not be making my prepared statement. I am all the more happy not to do so because we will have an opportunity to come back to all of the questions that have been raised in the report.

Allow me, however, just to give some idea about Cameroon's concerns. First, we are grateful to the Secretary-General for having devoted part of his report — indeed, the largest part — to Africa: to what the United Nations has been doing to bring peace to that continent and what take steps it is taking to diminish poverty there. In so doing, the Secretary-General aligns his activities and concerns squarely with the Millennium Declaration, in which global leaders expressed their commitment to give special priority attention to Africa's needs.

Regarding peace, we must say that considerable progress has been made. Apart from armed conflicts in six or seven countries, Africa is experiencing a relatively stable political situation. That is in contrast with the situation Africa experienced in 1998 when the Secretary-General published his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). Briefly, it will be recalled that at the time there were armed conflicts and civil wars in 14 African countries and serious crises and political disturbances in 11 others. The work of the United Nations in support of African efforts has done a good deal to restore stability in Africa.

I am also pleased to pay tribute to the activities of the Secretary-General in our subregion and, in particular, his personal involvement in certain situations covered in his report, notably, in paragraph 29, where he states:

> "With regard to United Nations support for the peaceful resolution of potentially violent conflicts, I was pleased with the significant progress achieved by Cameroon and Nigeria, with the assistance of the United Nations, in the implementation of the October 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice on the land and maritime boundary between the two countries. This progress was achieved within the framework of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, which I established at the request of the heads of State of the two countries ... [T]he withdrawal of the civilian administration, military and police forces by each of the two States from areas falling within the sovereignty of the other and the corresponding transfer of authority, as called for

by the Court, will enhance cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria."

I hope that the international community will continue to exert its influence so that the land of peace and cooperation, so long awaited, will finally arrive.

The progress made towards peace is encouraging, but, on the other hand, we are concerned that sub-Saharan Africa will not greet the year 2015 having reached the Millennium Development Goals, notwithstanding an average growth rate of about 4.5 per cent. We are told that it will have to wait until 2147 to attain those goals — that is, the middle of the twenty-second century. We will come back to that issue when we consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 38, on progress in implementation and support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

I am coming now to my last point, which is cooperation between the United Nations and international regional organizations. We welcome the ongoing strengthening of such cooperation, particularly with regard to Africa with the Economic Community of West African States, with the Southern African Development Community and with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We would have hoped that the report might have included some mention on cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States. Our expectations were particularly strong because in his report last year the Secretary-General announced that, at the request of the Security Council, he had dispatched an inter-agency mission to Central Africa to evaluate ways and means to lend greater momentum to this type of cooperation. We are sure that when we consider the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, the report will be available, that we will be informed about the great harvest that was gathered by that inter-agency mission that was sent to our part of Africa.

Those are just a few brief points that my delegation wanted to cover in considering the report of the Secretary-General.

This morning I read a study about fanaticism. Yes, we are living in a world that is characterized by fanaticism, a fanaticism that rejects those that are different, that rejects open-mindedness, that rejects the idea of sharing. Fanaticism is therefore the very origin and source of conflict. In order to combat fanaticism we need to cultivate and practise faithfulness to the individual.

As African wisdom has it, the past and the present become one in our will to preserve humankind. Today more than ever we are in duty bound to reaffirm our loyalty to our peoples and to build a future for them — the future that our heads of State mapped out at the Millennium Summit. We must build a world in which humankind will finally be free from fear — all fears - and free from want; that is, a world of peace.

That is the message we have gleaned from the report of the Secretary-General. That will also be our response to our peoples, who are fearful because their lives are at risk — our peoples who, each year, when the General Assembly is in session, look to the United Nations pleadingly, asking us: "For how long? For how long?"

Why, even at the heart of violence, does humankind not turn its back on the utopia of peace?

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/59/1?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.